

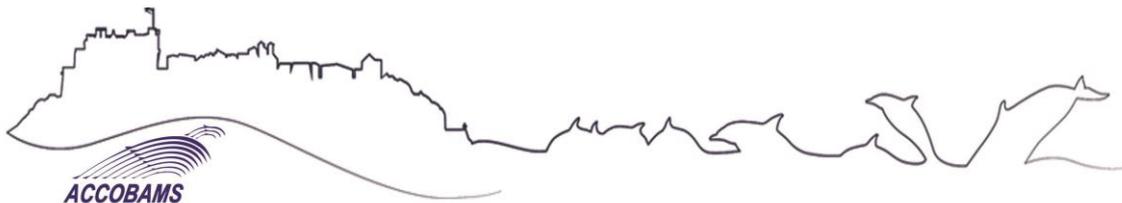


*Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area, concluded under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)*



*Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés de la Mer Noire, de la Méditerranée et de la zone Atlantique adjacente, conclu sous l'égide de la Convention sur la Conservation des Espèces Migratrices appartenant à la Faune Sauvage (CMS)*

# REPORT OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF ACCOBAMS



**Monaco, 15-17 April 2014**

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**AGENDA ITEM 1 - OPENING OF THE MEETING**

1. The Ninth Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC9) of ACCOBAMS was convened in Monaco from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2014. It was attended by Members of the Scientific Committee and Representatives from International Organizations and Observers including Partners of ACCOBAMS.
2. The full list of participants appears as [Annex 1](#) to this report.
3. Simone Panigada, the interim Chair of the Scientific Committee, welcomed the participants and opened the Meeting at 9:30 am, Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014, at the Congress Centre “Auditorium Rainier III” (Monaco).
4. Florence Descroix Comanducci, Executive Secretary of ACCOBAMS, also welcomed the participants and thanked CIESM and IUCN for their support as well as the Principality of Monaco for hosting the Meeting. She recalled the role of the Scientific Committee as stated in Resolution 5.3 and reminded the experts that they were selected for participating to the Scientific Committee as qualified individuals and not as representatives of their organization or country.
5. She informed the Meeting that Mrs Zakia Driouich, Chair of the ACCOBAMS Bureau for the triennium 2014-2016, was not able to attend the Meeting due to professional constraints. Nevertheless, Ms Zakia Driouich provided the Secretariat with a statement which was read by the Executive Secretary. She thanked the Principality of Monaco for its support in the organization of the Scientific Committee Meeting and the Scientific Committee for its efforts over the past years in providing advices to the Parties. She underlined the importance of this Meeting which should nominate its Chair and its Vice Chair and should agree on concrete activities to facilitate the implementation of the Work Program, bearing in mind the Resolutions adopted by the Meetings of the Parties.

**AGENDA ITEM 2 - ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

6. The provisional agenda of the Meeting contained in the Document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc01 was presented and the participants were invited to review and comment it.

7. The Scientific Committee adopted the agenda, as it appears in [Annex 2](#), and the proposed timetable.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3 - SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

#### **3.1 Designation of the chair and of the vice-chair of the Scientific Committee**

8. The Executive Secretary recalled that Resolution 5.3 adopted by the Contracting Parties asking the Scientific Committee to appoint its Chair from among the CIESM experts, its Vice-Chair from among the IUCN experts, and the task managers from among the other experts.
9. She informed the participants that during the informal consultation meeting, that took place just before the opening of this meeting, the Scientific Committee members agreed to appoint Simone Panigada as the Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee.
10. The Scientific Committee nominated Simone Panigada as the Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee for the period 2014-2016.
11. Simone Panigada thanked the Scientific Committee members for the nomination. He added that the informal consultation meeting agreed also to nominate Renaud de Stephanis as the Vice Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee.
12. The Scientific Committee nominated Renaud de Stephanis as the Vice Chair of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee for the period 2014-2016.

#### **3.2 Nomination of the Task Managers**

13. The Scientific Committee appointed the following Task Managers taking into account the priorities of the Working Program adopted by the Parties during the Fifth Meeting of the Parties:
  - Cetacean population estimates (including Basin wide survey): Simone Panigada;
  - Interaction with fisheries: Renaud de Stephanis;
  - Conservation of cetaceans critical habitats: Léa David;
  - Capacity Building (including public awareness and communication): Ayaka Amaha Oztürk.

14. Other members of the Scientific Committee as well as ACCOBAMS Partners offered their support to the Task Managers. The full list of the supporting group for each Task manager appears in [Annex 3](#).

### 3.3 Report of each Regional Representative

15. The Chair recalled that in accordance with the rules on the Scientific Committee adopted by MOP5, each regional representative should provide a report to the Meetings of the Scientific Committee on the conservation status of cetaceans and relevant activities in the region he or she has the responsibility of. He invited the regional representatives to introduce their respective reports contained in the following documents :
- ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/**Doc 05** : Report on the conservation status of cetaceans and relevant activities in Western Mediterranean and contiguous Atlantic area;
  - ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/**Doc 06** : Report on the conservation status of cetaceans and relevant activities in Central Mediterranean;
  - ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/**Doc 07** : Report on the conservation status of cetaceans and relevant activities in Eastern Mediterranean;
  - ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/**Doc 08** : Report on the conservation status of cetaceans and relevant activities in Black Sea.
16. Marina Sequeira, the Regional representative for the Western Mediterranean and contiguous Atlantic area, recalled that the area includes 6 countries: Algeria, France, Monaco, Morocco, Portugal and Spain with different projects. In Algeria the project described was on the assessment and monitoring of bottlenose dolphin groups along the Western Algerian coast. In France, activities focused within the PELAGOS Sanctuary, were mainly on: 1) Abundance/distribution estimates, photo-ID, telemetry, pollution/biopsy studies for all cetacean species present in the PELAGOS area; 2) public awareness and capacity building sessions (strandings and whale watching trainings). In Monaco, activities are mainly related to public awareness campaigns. In Morocco, the two main activities deal with 1) Stranding monitoring program and creation of a tissue bank; 2) Public awareness on the importance of whale watching activities. In Portugal, three main projects are ongoing : 1) MarPro Project (LIFE funded project) – aimed at i) Proving for the implementation of Habitats Directive creating cost-effective instruments for the analysis and interpretation of the evolution of the conservation status of both cetacean and their habitats; ii) Elaborating the proposal of new Natura 2000 network offshore areas and their management plans with reference to *Phocoena phocoena*, *Tursiops truncatus*; iii) Reducing

the conflicts between cetaceans and fisheries; 2) Project CETSENTI - Cetaceans as marine ecosystem health sentinels; 3) Population parameters and genetic structure of the harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) in the North Western coast of the Iberian Peninsula. In Spain, the following projects are ongoing: 1) Project CETASUR: Cetaceans in the Spanish Southern Mediterranean; 2) Project INDEMARES (LIFE funded project) - aimed at contributing to the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Spanish seas by identifying valuable areas to be integrated in the Natura 2000 network; 3) CETCAT Project - aimed at developing of sighting and acoustic transects for cetacean; 4) Fin Whale Project - Collection of data on Fin Whale and its marine habitat in the area between Tarragona and Barcelona. Samples have been taken for genetic studies.

17. Mehdi Aissi, the Regional Representative for the Central Mediterranean (Albania, Croatia, Italy, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Tunisia), was not able to attend the Meeting in Monaco and made the presentation of the report he prepared through a teleconference. He emphasized that the Cetacean studies and activities developed in the central Mediterranean Sea addressed various aspects such as large scale ecology, satellite telemetry, population distribution, genetics, capacity building as well as public awareness. Monitoring carried out since the last Scientific Committee Meeting used both visual and acoustic surveys from dedicated and opportunistic platforms. Based on the morphology of the study area, those platforms i.e., sailboats, ferries, planes but also fixed land stations, were regionally different.
18. He added that the research effort was unequally distributed between sub-areas and that several cross-border projects financed mainly by ACCOBAMS have allowed promoting cetacean studies in some areas described as poorly studied, like the Sicily channel and the Sardo-Tunisian channel. He presented a series of recommendations for improving the knowledge on cetacean population in the Central Mediterranean, stressing in particular the need for promoting cross-boundary collaboration.
19. Vasileios Petropoulos, the Regional Representative for the Eastern Mediterranean (Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Syria), informed the Meeting that two National Reports were received from the Eastern Med Focal Points. Two of the projects referred to Cetacean distribution and one to public awareness and education on Cetaceans. A communication from Egypt was also presented where it was described the potential fundraising for projects on Cetacean distribution. Titles of projects and a paper on the distribution of *Tursiops Truncatus* in Lebanese waters were reported. Apart from National conservation and educational/public awareness projects, a seismic survey for geophysical research that took

place in Ionian Sea/Greece in November 2012, between Ifremer and Hellenic National Observatory, was presented. JNCC protocol was followed, including guidelines for the areas of special importance, in the measures of the Environmental Action Plan. Lebanon also reported that all details on the Implementing of the Module "d'enseignement des Cétacés" in two universities in Lebanon are available at ACCOBAMS secretary. He briefly presented the recommendations from Eastern Mediterranean as described in Annex 4.

20. Konstantin Mikhailov, the Regional Representative for the Black Sea (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Ukraine), informed the Meeting that a combined aerial and vessel based survey was conducted in the Western Black Sea for assessment of cetacean distribution and abundance, identification of hot spots and critical habitats. Pilot cetacean Photo-ID activities in the Southern Bulgarian Black Sea were carried out for raising capacities of experts. Joint workshops and trainings were organized for Bulgarian municipal ecologists aiming at better coordination between responsible authorities in cases of cetacean strandings. An informational campaign related to cetacean conservation was conducted. Monitoring on cetacean strandings and by-catches, cetacean Photo-ID, and also activities related to strategies for capacity building and raising public awareness were conducted in Romania. Activity for Marine Natura 2000 sites enlargement was also implemented in Bulgaria. However, since this information was not an official one, explanatory details will be requested from the focal point, including information about the project under which it was carried out.
21. He recommended the continuation of the following activities: the independent on- board observer program, the functioning of the networks for cetacean monitoring and conservation, the training on samplings and necropsy and the research on IUU and ghost fishing.
22. The Scientific Committee endorsed the recommendations made by all Regional Representatives, as they appear in [Annex 4](#).
23. Following the presentation of the reports by the Regional Representatives, several participants took the floor to comment and/or complement the information provided, since the general feeling was that some important information were missing and the rationale behind the collection of the data was not clear.
24. Acknowledging that the reports were based on information received by the Regional representatives, the Scientific Committee agreed to establish a working group (Renaud De

Stephanis, Konstantin Mihaylov, Vasileios Petropoulos, Marina Sequeira, Iryna Makarenko, Caterina Fortuna, Tilen Genov, and ACCOBAMS Secretariat) to investigate options for the future preparation of these regional reports. Based on the results of the working group, the Scientific Committee confirmed that such reports can be a very powerful tool for the works of the Scientific Committee but not in their current format. In this context, it was decided, that the working group will work with the Secretariat to prepare a new template for reporting, which will be circulated electronically to the Scientific Committee. In the future, the information resulting from these reports will help preparing the agenda of the Scientific Committee Meetings. Furthermore, the information contained in these reports (e.g. regional or local abundance, population structure, distribution, stranding rates, anthropogenic mortality, threats, etc.) could then help the Scientific Committee assessing the conservation status of species and identify further priority actions.

25. The Scientific Committee agreed that the template should be made available to the regional representatives sufficiently early, so that they have ample time to collate the reports and submit them to the Chair and to the Secretariat in time for the preparation of the Scientific Committee Meeting agenda.
26. The Scientific Committee also agreed that in addition to the information provided through the ACCOBAMS National Focal Points, each Regional Representative should liaise with the relevant scientists and organizations in his/her region to collect additional reliable and updated information of relevance for the conservation of cetaceans. The Subregional Coordinating Units of ACCOBAMS will assist in collecting information on cetacean conservation from countries that are not yet Party to ACCOBAMS. All the additional information collected will be copied to the corresponding National Focal Points through the Secretariat.
27. The Scientific Committee agreed that the reports by the Regional Representatives are internal documents to the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS.

## AGENDA ITEM 4 - CONSERVATION ACTIONS

### 4.1- Improve knowledge about state of cetaceans

#### *4.1.1 Cetacean population estimates and distribution*

28. The works of the Scientific Committee on this agenda item started by presentations on recent cetacean surveys undertaken in the ACCOBAMS area. In this context Simone Panigada presented the cetacean population surveys carried out in the Western Black Sea in the summer of 2013 as part of a contract with the EU DG MARE to examine the adverse effects of fisheries upon cetacean populations (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf 05). The surveys included (i) a vessel survey in the coastal waters of Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine within 12 miles of the shore over a period of 31 days during July 2013, (ii) an aerial survey in the EEZs of Bulgaria and Romania and also in the EEZ of Ukraine, West of Crimea, over a period of 12 days in early July 2013, and (iii) a ferry survey using the service from Ilyichevsk (Odessa) in Ukraine to Poti in Georgia over a period of 5 days in late August 2013.
29. Each Survey was carried out using the ACCOBAMS recommended double platform method. The vessel survey produced 573 sightings, the Aerial survey 512 sightings and the vessel survey 263 sightings, where each sighting represented either a single animal or a group of animals.
- All the results of the surveys are now being analyzed using Distance software and will be available in the final report by August/ September 2014. Figures have been produced for: encounter rate, probability of observing an object in a defined area, estimated density of groups, mean group size, estimated density of animals and estimated number of animals in the surveyed area. These figures are broken down by species (P.p., T.t and D.d) and by survey area. Maps have also been produced showing each encounter site.
30. Simone Panigada presented preliminary results on a series of aerial surveys funded by the Italian Ministry of the Environment to assess abundance and densities of cetaceans in the Central and Southern Mediterranean Seas (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf 07). The areas selected for these surveys were the same covered in 2010-2011 by similar survey, with same protocols and observes. The 2013-2014 surveys were conducted using double platform data collection protocols, to allow for correction of perception bias. The ultimate goal was to shed light on the effect of the unusual mortality of cetaceans in a vast portion of the Central Mediterranean Sea reported for early 2013, and to allow comparisons with previous results obtained using the same technique during the 2009 and 2010-2011 surveys.

31. He presented also the information sent by Ana Štrbenac concerning the aerial survey of cetacean and sea turtle abundance in the Adriatic Sea that was carried out in July, August 2013 within the framework of the IPA Adriatic NETCET project (Network for the Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic). The survey was coordinated by ISPRA and BWI with support from the International Whaling Commission. The collected data are still being processed (further information on the project is available at [www.netcet.eu](http://www.netcet.eu)).
32. Boris Daniel presented the aerial surveys carried out within the framework of the knowledge program implemented by the French Agency for Marine Protected Areas concerning seabirds and marine mammals for the management and the identification of new candidate marine protected areas. The aerial survey was carried out in winter 2011/2012 and summer 2012 cover all the French marine waters. The strategy chosen is based on the work of a French group of expert. The method used is based on aerial observation at low altitude along predetermined linear transects. Within each sector, layering has been established in accordance with the main bathymetrical categories. The observation campaigns performed over 2 seasons, summer set as June to August and winter set as November to February (2 replicates per season according to the bathymetric layers).
33. According to the preliminary results, some significant areas were identified as candidate Marine Protected Areas for marine mammals and sea birds. The aeriels campaigns will be used for the efficient implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and of the Habitat Directive.
- Data available: 3 reports downloadable and maps observations, rate cards dating:  
<http://cartographie.aires-marines.fr/?q=node/45>
- Data occurrence: <http://inpn.mnhn.fr/espece/inventaire/l142>
34. Referring to document ACCOBAMS/SC9/2014/Inf 08, the Secretariat recalled that an extensive work has been done by the Scientific Committee regarding the development of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative and that the Scientific Committee has adopted several recommendations that were then endorsed as Resolutions by the Parties.
35. The Secretariat introduced Hervé Lethier, expert in fundraising and project development, who will be recruited by the ACCOBAMS Secretariat thanks to a financial support provided by the “Agence des Aires Marines Protégées” of France.

36. Hervé Lethier gave a presentation related to the development of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative, emphasizing that the documents prepared by the Scientific Committee provides a strong technical and scientific proposal. He emphasized that the key for succeeding in the project development and adequate fundraising would be to bridge 3 rationales: scientific, political and economic. He stressed the need for linking the conservation objectives with objectives related to some relevant economic sectors (fisheries, tourism, shipping, etc.) highlighting how the Survey initiative could provide useful information to these sectors, in addition to the data required for conservation purposes.
37. The Regional Representative for the Eastern Mediterranean informed that he received the following information from the Greek Focal Point: “in MODEG (Marine Observation and Data Expert Group) 21 meeting minutes, at the field of interaction with other organizations, it is stated that MODEG will invite ACCOBAMS to start communication. This was an action tasked to Greece by the MOP5 and Greece acted accordingly. More information on the subject would be provided to the ACCOBAMS Secretariat directly by the Greek Focal Point”.
38. Referring to document ACCOBAMS/SC9/2014/Inf 06, the Secretariat then presented the methodological approach that will be followed in the next months for preparing the documents to be presented to potential donors, as well as the governance structure that will be established for supporting the process and the involvement of all stakeholders.
39. During the discussion on the proposed next steps, the scientific committee confirmed that the objectives and the methodological options developed by its working group on the “Survey initiative” are still valid and that the project concept to be proposed to the potential donors should be based on these objectives. In this context, the Secretariat stressed the importance of obtaining the full involvement of national authorities and other stakeholders in the next steps of the project finalization.
40. Following the discussion on this Agenda item, the Scientific Committee recommended:
  - To proceed with the next steps to finalize the project on the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative and have it implemented urgently;
  - That the SC steering group on the survey initiative and the MSFD ASCOBANS/ ACCOBAMS working group provide support to Hervé Lethier;
  - To follow a coherent approach : external coherence (with other Organizations and Initiatives such as MSFD and CBD) and internal coherence (coordination among countries);

- To take into account the lessons learned from previous survey carried out in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea during the last years and the reasons that impeded or facilitated the survey. This should be considered carefully and a back-up plan should be prepared in case authorizations will not be delivered by some countries;
- That the appointment of a coordinator, as stressed in previous recommendations, should be treated as a matter of urgency.

#### *4.1.2 Population Structure*

41. Iryna Makarenko, the representative of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission (BSC PS), presented the document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc 09 related to the assessment and inventory of specimens of Black Sea bottlenose dolphins kept in captivity. She informed the participants that the BSC PS undertook the elaboration of the roadmap in consultation with all stakeholders. She underlined that possible measures in this direction could be to include this issue (i) in the Conservation Plan for Black Sea cetaceans to be revised, as well as (ii) in the monitoring and reporting activities done by the different bodies of the BSC.
42. Referring to document ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc 20, the Chair of the Scientific Committee informed the Meeting about the preparation of a draft Recommendation to be presented at the next Conference of the Parties to CITES regarding cetaceans kept in captivity. The Secretariat underlined the need to identify some ACCOBAMS Parties that would potentially endorse the presentation of this draft Recommendation. The representative of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission proposed that the BSC PS addresses to the Black Sea Commission for additional information and clarifications on this issue.
43. The Chair presented the report of a workshop organized at the 2013 ECS Conference on population structure (document ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc 21).
44. The Scientific Committee took note of the recommendations of this workshop and stressed the need to have a regular update on the available information related to population structure, based on bibliography and on ongoing projects. The Chair of the Scientific Committee proposed to contact the organizers of the ECS workshop regarding the ongoing

activities on population structure in the ACCOBAMS area and the Vice-Chair proposed to contribute to this work.

45. The Chair also informed the Meeting about a project proposed by the University of Montpellier entitled: “Integrative approach for conservation policies regarding the protection of the Mediterranean fin whale and its ecosystems”. The project aims to *inter alia* collect baleen plate or bone material from stranded animals or from museums in the North, South, East and West of the Mediterranean Sea.

#### 4.1.3 Monitoring cetaceans status

46. The Chair presented the document ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc19 concerning the proposal to include the Cuvier’s beaked whale in Annex I of the CMS and informed the Meeting that the CMS Conference of the Parties (Bergen, Norway 2011) asked the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee to prepare a proposal to include the Mediterranean Cuvier’s beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) in the Appendix 1 (granting to this species the endangered status) of the CMS to be presented to the CMS COP 11 in 2014.
47. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that during MOP5 the representative of Spain offered that his country will present the proposal to CMS, stressing that while confirming his offer, the Focal Point of Spain informed the Secretariat that the process was launched but it should go through an endorsement by the European Union. The Secretariat also stressed the need for sponsors.
48. The Scientific Committee suggested to approach Italy and Croatia as potential sponsors.
49. Lobna Ben Nakhla, representative of RAC/SPA, presented the Progress Report on the Mediterranean Database of Cetacean Strandings (MEDACES) contained in document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc 10. She recalled that in November 2001, the 12<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention approved the set-up of a Mediterranean database on cetacean strandings (MEDACES). RAC/SPA is the depositary for the database, while the management is entrusted to the University of Valencia. The MEDACES has been expanded to cover regions as defined in ACCOBAMS.

50. MEDACES currently contains 14,030 data from the coast of twenty riparian countries to the Mediterranean and Black seas. France, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Ukraine were the countries with the highest number of submitted records.
51. Data analyses presented in this report have identified the occurrence of unusual stranding rates in the Mediterranean in recent years. Several species has been affected: striped dolphins, common dolphins, harbor porpoises and bottlenose dolphins. The number of striped dolphins and pilot whales stranded was significantly higher in 2007 and 2008, due to the mortality caused by a Morbillivirus infection.
52. The data on cetacean stranding submitted by riparian countries to the Mediterranean and Black Sea were consistent with the available information about the distribution of cetacean species in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.
53. She recommended that the National Focal Points should increase the support to the national organizations and institutions working in stranding networks. This should be conducted through RAC/SPA or/and ACCOBAMS. In addition, standardized methods for necropsies and tissue sampling, as well as coordination procedures, should be prepared.
54. The Scientific Committee suggested to prepare a letter jointly by RAC-SPA and ACCOBAMS to Countries encouraging them to provide their stranding data to MEDACES.
55. Renaud de Stephanis presented document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc11 about the assessment of IUCN conservation status of cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area, emphasizing that up to date the three species of cetacean from the Black Sea are included in the IUCN category of Endangered. Regarding the Mediterranean, common dolphins and sperm whales were included in the category of Endangered in the Mediterranean Sea, fin whales, striped dolphins and bottlenose dolphins were included in the category of Vulnerable. He added that the Mediterranean beaked whales were being evaluated in 2014.
56. He stressed that according to the information available he couldn't get information on why the killer whale, previously proposed to be included in the category Critical Endangered, was taken out of the listing. The IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation explained that this was due to the Mediterranean boundaries.

57. The Scientific Committee agreed on the following actions:
- The subpopulations that are still Data Deficient should be reassessed as soon as possible to assign them to a more informative Red List category.
  - Reassessment of long finned pilot whales and killer whales will be led by Renaud de Stephanis, with Ana Cañadas, and colleagues from other areas.
  - The Scientific Committee should keep seeking information on every subpopulation status so that when the time of reassessments comes it will be ready to support the persons in charge with fresh data and insights.
  - Definition of the boundaries of the Mediterranean Sea according to ecological and oceanographic features should be considered.
58. Tim Lewis informed the Meeting that he was invited with Dani Kerem by the Eight Meeting of the Scientific Committee to review the current state of knowledge of rough-toothed dolphins in the Mediterranean and, if appropriate, to prepare an assessment for the IUCN Red List and provide conservation advice. Work on this is ongoing, further evaluation of genetic data is required before a decision on such a listing can be made. Status of cetaceans in the eastern Mediterranean will also be discussed at the upcoming Scientific Committee meeting of the IWC and it is expected that new information will be available after the meeting.

#### **4.2 Reduce human pressures on cetaceans, in particularly those related to bycatch, habitat loss and degradation (pollution)**

##### *4.2.1 Interaction with fisheries*

59. Referring to document ACCOBAMS/SC9/2014/Inf 09, the Secretariat presented the progress made so far in the development of the joint ACCOBAMS-GFCM project on cetacean bycatch and depredation reduction. It informed the Meeting that a workshop was organized in April 2013 with experts from the region for identifying the case studies to be included in the project. It added that the project proposal received an agreement in principle for funding from the MAVA Foundation and the full project document was being prepared
60. The Secretariat presented also document ACCOBAMS/SC9/2014/Inf 23 and recalled that considering the importance of integrating the efforts for the conservation of cetaceans with fishing activities and their implications in terms of impacts on cetacean populations, the Contracting Parties to ACCOBAMS instructed the Secretariat to establish close collaboration

with GFCM. In this context, the Secretariat established contacts with the relevant bodies of GFCM and participated in their relevant meetings to highlight the main cetacean conservation issues in relation to fisheries. These contacts generated two main achievements:

- The signature in 2012 of a collaboration agreement between ACCOBAMS and GFCM;
- The adoption by the GFCM of a recommendation on the mitigation of incidental catches of cetaceans in the GFCM area.

61. The Secretariat informed the Meeting about the issues addressed by GFCM that are of relevance to the conservation of cetaceans.
62. The Scientific Committee stressed the importance of the interaction with fisheries and welcomed the collaboration established with GFCM and the expected financial contribution from MAVA Foundation to the project presented by the Secretariat. The Scientific Committee encouraged the collaboration with the ICES Working Group on Bycatch of protected species (WGBYC).

#### *4.2.2 Anthropogenic noise*

63. Yanis Souami, Co-Chair of the Joint Noise Working Group (JNWG) presented the document ACCOBAMS/SC9/2014/Doc 12. The document included: (1) The progress report of the JNWG, (2) The list of JNWG members and (3) Terms of Reference and action plan.
64. On point (1), he recalled that the documents requested by the Scientific Committee during SC8 have been adopted at the MOP5 (ACCOBAMS/MOP5/2013/Doc22, Doc23 and Doc24). He added that the JNWG provided inputs for the “CBD Expert workshop on underwater noise and its impacts on Marine and Coastal biodiversity” and at UNEP/MAP for the “Correspondence Group on Mediterranean Good Environmental Status and Target” CORGEST meeting. The consultation process will continue in the future. He emphasized that, thanks to Peter Evans and the European Cetacean Society (ECS), a joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS workshop “Introducing noise into the marine environment: what are the requirements for an impact assessment for marine mammals?” was organized on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2014, at the occasion of the ECS Conference in Liege (Belgium).

65. On point (2), he presented briefly the table containing the Terms of Reference and the related actions proposed by the two co-chairs. He stressed that this document has been revised by some members of the JNWG during a meeting at Liege the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2014. He invited the Scientific Committee to set priorities in the action plan. The revised document will be then circulated to the JNWG for comments and validation.
66. Following the discussion on this agenda item, the Scientific Committee adopted the following activities as priorities for the JNWG: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 27, 28, 29, 34, 40, 41 and 43. The proposed JNWG work program is presented in [Annex 5](#).
67. The Scientific Committee agreed that the work on Ziphius habitat modeling be conducted and explained by the experts that performed the modeling and invited them to exchange regularly with the JNWG about the progress and the noise issue related to the model.
68. Following a request by the Chair, the Regional Representative for the East Mediterranean informed the Meeting about the incident of cetacean strandings south of Crete during Military Exercises. He emphasized that the exercise which came under the name of Noble Dina has been taking place for the last 4 years in the same area, and the participating nations where Greece, Israel and the United States of America. He added that he received the following information from Greece:
- Greece as a member to NATO and Party to the ACCOBAMS has stated that it respects and complies fully to the ACCOBAMS Resolution 4.17. This was in line with the fact that no Cetacean strandings have ever been linked to Hellenic Navy National Exercises;
  - The mid frequency sonar has been linked in the past with Cetacean strandings, but only when operated with high levels of dB. Low frequency sonar is as well linked with Cetacean strandings events when high dB levels were used. Still the Hellenic Navy has been conducting exercises with the use of high level of dB in the past and there were never linked to Cetacean strandings since ACCOBAMS Resolution 4.17 procedures were applied. The paper from Tyack *et. al*, 2011, "Beaked whales respond to stimulated and actual navy sonar", PLoS ONE, March 2011, Volume 6 is supporting the argument that when procedures are followed, high levels of dB can be used during Naval sonar exercises without any Cetacean strandings record;
  - Greece supports its stands expressed at MOP5 and states that the incident during the tripartite exercise would be presented to NATO, and in the future it will be

elaborated with the rest of the participants of the specific exercise, Noble Dina, in order to be planned at 50 nautical miles far from the Coast of Crete Island;

- The full detailed information will be provided soon by the Greek National Focal Point.

69. The Scientific Committee took note of the information provided by Greece and reported by the regional representative for the Eastern Mediterranean on the location, source levels and frequency of MFA sonar used by the Greek navy vessel during its participation in the trilateral "Noble Dina" naval exercise off Crete which coincided with strandings of beaked whales on the south-eastern coast of Crete. It welcomed the offer of Greece to provide the full detailed information on this issue.
70. Tim Lewis recognized that Greece could not provide corresponding details on the sonar used by the other navies involved in the exercise, but asked if the ACCOBAMS Secretariat could request these important details from the countries concerned. Details may help understand the recent strandings and why previous versions of this exercise have apparently not coincided with strandings.
71. The Secretariat indicated that it will consult with the Bureau of ACCOBAMS about the most appropriate ways of approaching the relevant authorities of the United States of America and Israel regarding this issue.
72. Sylvia Frey, the representative of OceanCare, raised concerns about the increasing ocean noise pollution generated by seismic explorations, in different areas of the Mediterranean Sea. It has been noted that the impacts of loud underwater noise (particularly those in the mid-frequency range) on marine life, and in particular on Cuvier's beaked whales, are well known. After the recent 2D seismic explorations carried out between September 2013 and January 2014 in the Adriatic Sea, under Croatian permits, a first licensing round for further explorations was launched on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014. Attention should be devoted to the southern Adriatic Sea, which has been pointed out as an important area for Cuvier's beaked whale (Holcer et al. 2007), and this has been confirmed by two aerial surveys carried out in the Adriatic Sea (2010: Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research & the Blue World Institute unpublished data; 2013: IPA-Adriatic project NETCET).
73. After a question raised by Sylvia Frey, the Regional Representative for the Eastern Mediterranean presented explanations he received from the Greek Focal Point, including the

scientific approach explaining the reason why Greece was opposed at MOP5 to adopting the map of "Areas of Special Concern for Cuvier's beaked whales".

74. The Scientific Committee expressed concerns and recommended that:
- The map of the areas of special concern for Cuvier's beaked whales as prepared by the Scientific Committee and presented to the ACCOBAMS Parties at the MOP5 in 2013 (Recommendation 8.6) should be updated using more recent data, possibly with the integration of stranding data and details on the methodology should be provided
  - All seismic explorations in the ACCOBAMS area should comply with the Resolution 4.17 and Resolution 5.15.
75. The Chair invited the ACCOBAMS Secretariat to present the note of intent regarding the overview of hot spots (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc 12).
76. The Secretariat explained that this note of intent described the proposed work plan with relevant information to be collected and estimated time of activities to be implemented in order to map anthropogenic noise hot spots in the ACCOBAMS area.
77. The Scientific Committee welcomed the document and asked the Secretariat to make sure that all available data are used to map anthropogenic noise hot spots in the ACCOBAMS area.
78. Fannie Dubois, Executive Secretary of the Pelagos Sanctuary, informed the Meeting that, in the framework of the French research program of the Pelagos Sanctuary, real-time mapping of noise from marine traffic in the French waters of the Pelagos Sanctuary has just been completed by SINAY. Acoustic models have been prepared for summer 2012. Results are available online:
- Study: [http://www.sanctuaire-pelagos.org/sensibilisation/bulletins-de-liaison-annuel/doc\\_download/278-13-036](http://www.sanctuaire-pelagos.org/sensibilisation/bulletins-de-liaison-annuel/doc_download/278-13-036)
  - Real-time map: [www.oceannoisemap.com](http://www.oceannoisemap.com)

#### *4.2.3 Ship strikes*

79. The Chair presented the Terms of reference of the working group regarding fin whales conservation and collisions in the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS-

SC9/2014/Inf 11). ACCOBAMS and the International Whaling Commission (IWC) have recognized the problem of ship strikes and have been working together to develop a better understanding of the issue and to develop effective mitigation measures inter alia within the ACCOBAMS area. A Working Group with an according Steering Committee were established under the auspices of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee to ensure that the recommendations of the workshops and the resolutions from the Meeting of the Parties are acted upon. The Steering Committee and Working Group will work in close contact with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, the IWC, the Pelagos Sanctuary and other relevant experts.

80. This working group should continue to work so as to collate information and report on relevant studies within and outside the ACCOBAMS area. It will foster collaboration with ASCOBANS, CMS and IMO and develop priority actions and studies, including the development and the implementation of a standard training module.
81. New members were selected for the Working Group and they will be added to the correspondence group.
82. The IWC and Italy have been co-operating on aerial surveys to determine the extent and abundance of cetaceans including fin whales within parts of the Mediterranean as well as on a telemetry program to begin to investigate the movements and distribution of fin whales outside the summer season; these results will be useful in addressing and potentially mitigating the issue of ship strikes within the Mediterranean Sea.
83. The Chair also presented document on the update on the update on the ACCOBAMS-IWC joint effort on ship strikes (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc 14). The ultimate objective for ACCOBAMS is to collect enough information to allow a robust assessment of the extent of ship strikes within the agreement area and, at the same time, to develop and evaluate effective mitigation measures. While priority for mitigation measures may be directed at areas/species where there is a probable effect on population level, it has to be stressed that animal welfare issues, relevant to individual whales, represent an additional dimension to this problem, which shall not be neglected.
84. The work carried out by the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee shall lead to the creation of a Mediterranean network, including ACCOBAMS Range States, ACCOBAMS Partners, IWC, research institutes and concerned shipping companies to contribute to the global ship strike

data base developed by the IWC (as well as to local-regional ones), so as to facilitate information exchange and data sharing.

85. The IWC is funding two ship strikes co-ordinators to take forward work on this issue including the recommendations of the joint workshop held in 2010. Key components of the work of the ship strikes co-coordinators involve better communication with stakeholders (e.g. shipping companies, scientists, maritime institutions) and increased reporting of events via the global ship strikes database (<http://data.iwc.int/ShipStrike/logon.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fshipstrike>), and regional initiatives, as well as an increased effort in this regard within the ACCOBAMS area.
86. A joint IWC-SPAW workshop to address collisions between marine mammals and ships, with a focus on the wider Caribbean is currently being organized. The workshop will take place in Panama on 18-20 June 2014.
87. Léa David presented new progress in studies about ship strikes, namely the work of the JCR-EU (Vaes and Druon, 2013), crossing data of habitat modeling of fin whales and maritime traffic collected by AIS, in the whole occidental basin. The areas the most at risk for ship strike were the south coasts of the basin and all the north part. This map confirmed previous work of David and Di-Méglio (2010) in the north-western part including Pelagos Sanctuary. These authors also mapped the high risk areas for sperm whale in this area and highlight the complementarity with those of fin whales. These results are important from a management and conservation point of view. Numbers were given, confirming the threats for fin whales and probably the fact that numbers are underestimates for sperm whale. During observation in effort aboard the ferry line Toulon/Ajaccio during one year, in the Ferry Line Transect collaborative project (ISPRA coordinator), ecoOcéan Institut was able to calculate the frequency of near miss events for both species. Results confirmed the high risk areas of ship strikes for fin whale and sperm whale, and also the fact that risk actually exists all year long for both species.
88. Pascal Mayol, representative of the NGO “Souffleurs d’Ecume”, informed the Meeting that ten French ships were equipped with REPCET, especially thanks to the help of the French Federation of ship owners (Armateurs de France) which alerts its members on the ship strikes issue. It stressed that it was important to develop REPCET on board of Italian and Spanish ships in order to get a framework of 30 equipped ships in the North western basin (the minimum effective number in order to guarantee proper validation of the system as a

mitigation tool, as suggested by the joint ACCOBAMS/IWC workshop in 2010). Since 3 years, they have been trying to involve the Italian and the Spanish federations of ship owners (respectively CONFITARMA and ANAVE), with the help of Armateurs de France, but without significant results yet. Therefore, support from Italian and Spanish Focal Points was necessary. An official meeting with ACCOBAMS, Pelagos, CONFITARMA, ANAVE, Armateurs de France and scientists could be organized to evaluate the feasibility of equipping Italian and Spanish ships (including State ships).

89. Concerning the project to register the Pelagos Sanctuary as a PSSA, Fannie Dubois informed the Meeting that a consultation of stakeholders has been conducted in the Italian Part of the Sanctuary. Results of this consultation mentioned that particular attention should also be devoted when suggesting speed limits for the ships crossing the proposed PSSA waters. Reducing the vessel speed may have some negative impacts:
- On commercial equity between ship owners of the Pelagos Sanctuary;
  - On ecological issue: while it is widely recognized that a reduction in speed may decrease the chances of collision risk, a further decrease may drive ship captains to increase speed while transiting outside the PSSA borders, thus increasing the risk of ship strikes in the ACCOBAMS area.
90. She added that the Project is still under negotiations between the three Parties to the Pelagos Agreement.
91. The Chair noted that the area suggested for the establishment of the PSSA in the Pelagos Sanctuary under the framework of the IMO does not represent a comprehensive representation of critical habitats in the area, since critical habitats for fin whales are present also towards the Balearic Islands. In addition, the ship strikes risk maps and the traffic maps presented by Lea David, clearly showed areas of high risk in the Gulf of Lion, outside the proposed PSSA borders. Careful attention should be devoted to extending the surface of the proposed PSSA so that all critical habitats for cetaceans in the region will be covered.
92. Sylvia Frey informed the Scientific Committee that OceanCare supports the development of a whale listening network for conservation and avoidance of sperm whale ship strikes in the Mediterranean Sea. Striving for a technology assisted solution, the Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute in Greece and specialized technology research groups from three European countries (University of Basel, University of Algarve, FORTH Research Center in Greece) have joined forces with OceanCare in a cross-disciplinary effort - involving

underwater acoustics, applied mathematics and computer networking - to develop and test an automated system that listens for sperm whales across busy shipping lanes, providing timely information that can lead to avoidance of 'ship-strikes'. The system will also generate data, which can be useful for learning more about these animals and the impacts of human activities in their habitat, helping hopefully with the development of a more effective conservation approach.

#### *4.2.4 Cetacean watching*

93. The Chair invited the Pelagos and ACCOBAMS Secretariats to introduce the document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf 12 about the Joint ACCOBAMS – Pelagos Information on whale watching certificate.
  
94. The Executive Secretary of the Pelagos Sanctuary reminded the Meeting that Resolution 4.5 of the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Pelagos Agreement provided for the establishment of a joint Pelagos-ACCOBAMS label whose draft was presented during the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties. This label, presented to the COP5 (Rome, June 2013) is composed by a logo and some specifications, which complies with the code of conduct. During the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Pelagos Agreement, it was clear that parties did not have the legal basis to implement a label, in which the State, through its administration, is an actor of the certification process and control. Therefore, specifications have not been adopted by the Parties. The 7<sup>th</sup> Scientific and Technical Committee of the Pelagos Agreement, (October 2013) charged the Working Group "whale watching" to identify problems faced by the Parties in the implementation of the proposed labelling and to consider all solutions possible to regulate this activity efficiently and effectively (charters, contracts of adhesion, integration of label in those existing tourist activities, etc.). Results of these investigations will be presented at the next Scientific and Technical Committee of the Pelagos Sanctuary, planned for October 2014.
  
95. The ACCOBAMS Secretariat informed the participants that Parties, during MOP5, mandated the Secretariat, in cooperation with the Pelagos Secretariat, to prepare a framework document regarding national rules on the implementation of a "High quality whale watching" certificate, to be submitted at the Sixth Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS in 2016. Parties were encouraged to adopt national rules in order to implement at national level the certificate in relevant bodies.

96. Pascal Mayol and Léa David informed the Meeting that whale-watching was growing in French Mediterranean sea (+3,5%/year increase in the number of operators). High risk areas of harassment, disturbance and collision for all cetacean species by whale-watching have been identified and were widespread along and offshore the French Mediterranean coast. The services of cetaceans' spotting by plane on behalf of more and more whale-watching operators, and the commercial swim with cetaceans' activities were growing in the absence of a management system. These observations revealed that there were practices that are not in line with a high environmental quality activity. One of the reasons of the delay in the practical application of this certification is the difficulty for some countries, as France, to establish an institutional certificate (juridical difficulties).
97. Given this difficulty, they proposed that Pelagos and ACCOBAMS delegate the management of the certificate to an organization in each concerned countries. The status of ACCOBAMS partner could be a precondition to allow to carry out the label in this Country.
98. Marina Sequeira presented the document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc 15 (ToR for the assessment, monitoring and data collection of cetaceans watching activities in the ACCOBAMS Area). She reminded the Meeting that the Work Program 2014-2016 adopted by the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the ACCOBAMS Agreement (Resolution. 5.2) asked the Scientific Committee to:
- Assess the whale watching activities and critical areas for these activities in the Mediterranean Sea;
  - Prepare guidelines for monitoring cetacean watching development in the Agreement Area and guidelines to develop national databases to store the information;
  - Prepare procedures and forms on data collection for cetacean watching vessels for the Agreement Area.
99. The following ToR were proposed:
- Identify experts within the ACCOBAMS Parties or active in the Agreement area, which will provide valuable information on cetacean watching activities in the area, and will update the inventory of operators currently conducting these activities in the ACCOBAMS area (see ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Inf 36);
  - Identify critical areas for cetacean watching activities and propose guidelines for monitoring programs aimed at maximizing the chance of detecting potential

adverse impacts on individual cetaceans and on populations, taking into account the existing work on this issue elsewhere in the world;

- Collect information on different types of operator data collection systems in the ACCOBAMS area and propose a common procedure (data collection system) to be implemented in the Agreement area.

100. Regarding the desirable common procedure to identify operators and monitoring the whale-watching activity in the Agreement area, Pascal Mayol and Léa David informed the Meeting that they could provide ACCOBAMS with the protocol applied in the French part of the Pelagos Sanctuary since 2005 (economic and ecological monitoring of the cetaceans watching activities), adapted from the work of Eric Hoyt and based on definitions provided by the IWC.

101. It was agreed that in the view of ensuring that any expansion of cetacean watching activities in the Agreement area be carefully managed in order to minimize potential adverse impacts on cetacean individuals and populations, a Working Group composed by Scientific Committee members in cooperation with other experts and partners (Pascal Mayol, Tilen Genov, Marina Sequeira, Renaud de Stephanis, Caterina Fortuna, Fannie Dubois and Léa David) will address the Terms of Reference and report on this issue to the next Scientific Committee Meeting.

#### *4.2.5 Marine debris*

102. The Chair introduced the Note on plastic materials impacts on cetaceans (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc 16) prepared based on a document by Cristina Fossi, (University of Siena, Italy). The Chair reminded that during the Fifth Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS (5-8 November 2013, Tangier), the Scientific Committee was requested to assess the impact of plastic bags, microplastics and other plastic materials ingestion on cetaceans in cooperation with existing initiatives, such as IWC (bibliographic synthesis and Scientific Committee recommendation).

103. The Secretariat presented an Information note on the assessment of the impact of ghost nets on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area (ACCOBAMS/SC9/2014/Inf13) recalling that the ACCOBAMS Work Program for 2014-2016 entrusted the Secretariat with the development, in collaboration with MEDPOL and GFCM, of a project to assess the impact of ghost nets on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area.

104. Sami Hassani, the representative of ASCOBANS, informed the Meeting that during the Advisory Committee meeting of ASCOBANS in 2012 (AC 19) the establishment of a working group on marine debris was agreed. The coordinator of the working group is Marchien de Ruyter (North Sea Foundation). During the last AC (20) in September 2013, it was recommended that this working group liaises with OSPAR and HELCOM to avoid duplication since these organizations were already working on this issue.
105. Tilen Genov, informed the Meeting that a new European project on this issue was recently launched in the Adriatic Sea, and may be a useful source of information or point of contact for future collaboration on this topic. The project is called DeFishGear (Derelict Fishing Gear Management System in the Adriatic Region) and is implemented with the financial assistance of the IPA Adriatic Cross-Border Cooperation Program. The project is addressing the wider marine litter and ghost fishing issues to ultimately provide a key strategic input on a regional level. At the end of the project, the project is expected to provide the assessment of marine litter, better knowledge on micro plastic pollution and its effects on marine biota, and actions for the reduction of marine litter and ghost fishing. The project is coordinated by the National Institute of Chemistry Ljubljana (Slovenia) and involves 16 partners from countries around the Adriatic Sea and portion of the Ionian Sea (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia).
106. The Scientific Committee suggested that the Secretariat, in developing the project, approaches Cristina Fossi, and the ASCOBANS working group on marine debris.
107. Regarding the assessment of the impact of ghost nets on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area, it was recommended that the Secretariat take into consideration similar project, such as DeFishGear project, for its future activities.
108. The Secretariat informed the Meeting about a CBD notification regarding a request for information on the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats. It was suggested that the Secretariat contacts Cristina Fossi and the ASCOBANS working group on this issue.

#### *4.2.6 Climate change*

109. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present the concept note on the workshop on climate change and a bibliographic synthesis, prepared by Mark Simmonds, on the impact of climate change on marine mammals (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf 14 and Inf 15).
110. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that due to logistical constraints, and as agreed during the Fifth Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS (5-8 November 2013, Tangier), the workshop, previously foreseen in 2013 had been postponed to 2014. It will be held in the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2014. Recommendations formulated during the workshop will be circulated by email to all the Members of the Scientific Committee, and then presented for adoption at the Sixth Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS.
111. The Scientific Committee took note of the concept note on the workshop on climate change and recommended that the Secretariat invites also relevant experts from EU, IPCC and the Barcelona Convention / RAC-SPA. Participants were asked to provide the Secretariat with missing references to the bibliographic synthesis.

#### *4.2.7 Species Conservation Plans*

112. Guido Gnone, the coordinator of the Mediterranean Bottlenose Dolphin Conservation Plan (MBCP) recalled that in 2012, under the direction of Caterina Fortuna, the sub-area coordinators were asked to process an extended report on the status of the bottlenose dolphin, according to the data available. Following this first step, a short questionnaire was sent to all the sub-area coordinators, asking for their perception in relation to the bottlenose dolphin status in each sub-area. In total 11 complete answers were received from 13 sub-areas (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13).
113. The bottlenose dolphin is considered as a regular species in all the sub-areas. It is considered stable in 5 sub-areas (2, 4, 6, 10a, 13); decreasing in 2 sub-areas (10b, 11); increasing in 2 sub-areas (1, 5). In three sub-areas (8, 9, 12) the coordinators have no idea of possible trends.
114. Data shortage seems to be a major problem in most of the sub-areas. However it is not clear if the effort to aggregate all the data available was always profitable. The dispersion of data and the difficulty to aggregate these in a rationale system may be a common problem in several sub-areas.

115. Following a MoU between the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS and Fondazione Acquario di Genova, it was therefore agreed to implement the Web-GIS Intercet platform in the MBCP as a tool to promote data sharing on a common support. A provisional list of about 100 potential data contributors at Mediterranean level was processed.
116. Following recommendations from the SC8, the reference Mediterranean Map (originally subdivided in 13 sub-areas) was reconsidered and a new map with indicative boundaries (subdivided in 14 sub-areas) was proposed.
117. Following a discussion about the links between Intercet and other analogous database on a local and global scale and about how the sub-area coordinators should act to promote data sharing, the Scientific Committee agreed that:
- The Intercet platform will be linked to other local database (such as CETIDMED) and global ones (such as OBIS SEA-MAP) to the extent possible, in order to highlight any existing data resource and give to this the best value within the project;
  - The sub-area coordinators network will be re-considered according to the new Mediterranean Map; a total of 14 coordinators will be identified to promote the data sharing process on a sub-area level. The sub-area coordinators could also act as local “Intercet administrator”; this should facilitate the networking process;
  - To give strength and consistency to the MBCP, the SC9 agreed to overlap the MBCP with the ACCOBAMS survey initiative.
118. Considering that the bottlenose dolphin is a resident opportunistic species, structuring its distribution in discrete units/(sub)populations having local ecological/cultural specializations, the Scientific Committee recommended that the data collection plan on a Mediterranean level fully matches with the local level needs. The survey plan should therefore include shelf limited boat based surveys at sub-area level aimed at:
- Identifying the distribution and the geographical/genetic borders of the units/(sub)populations;
  - Estimating the size of the different units/(sub)populations;
  - Identifying the main threats for the different units/(sub)populations;
  - Investigating the contamination level of the different units/(sub)populations.

119. Furthermore the Scientific Committee agreed the following tasks:
- ACCOBAMS, with the advice of the MBCP Coordinator (Guido Gnone), will update and consolidate the Mediterranean network and the Med-map identifying the proper sub-area coordinators according to the MBCP objectives (deadline July 2014);
  - The MBCP Coordinator will make Intercet available to all the potential data contributors on a Mediterranean level;
  - The MBCP Coordinator, together with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and ACCOBAMS experts, will process and propose a boat based, shelf limited data collection protocol to integrate the ACCOBAMS survey plan (deadline December 2014).
120. Caterina Fortuna, the IWC representative, introduced document SC9.Doc17 that summarized the lessons learned by the IWC SC while addressing the issue of Conservation and Management Plans. Recently the IWC has adopted Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) as a practical tool for improving the conservation status of the most at risk cetacean populations. References to the adopted process on how to handle the preparation of conservation plans were provided to the Scientific Committee, including approved IWC guidelines.
121. The ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee welcomed the presentation and agreed that in the long term the IWC approach should be the way forward. However due to a lack of financial support for the drafting of conservation plans following the IWC template requested by the MOP5, the same approach used for the preparation of the already adopted conservation plans (e.g. the conservation plan of the Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphin) will be used. In this context, the Scientific Committee invited Renaud De Stephanis and Ana Cañadas to take the lead to look for funding and to start the elaboration of conservation plans for Killer Whale, Pilot whale and Beaked whale, tentatively before the next Scientific Committee Meeting.
122. Sami Hassani stressed the importance of having a coordinator for each conservation plan. He added that in ASCOBANS it was decided to have a coordinator for the conservation plan for the Harbor Porpoise in the North Sea which proved to be very helpful.
123. Following a question by Ayaka Amaha Oztürk on why the Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphin is not covered in this agenda, the Chair answered that the Conservation Plan for Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphins had been prepared and endorsed by

the ACCOBAMS Parties. However, the implementation of all the actions listed needs to be enforced. The Scientific Committee again emphasized the importance of this conservation plan and recalled the parties to implement this plan.

124. Iryna Makarenko presented the second document prepared by the BSC Permanent Secretariat, for the attention of the members of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee, namely the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the revision of the existing Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans (2006-2010). She emphasized that the BSC PS undertakes the revision of the existing Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans (2006-2010) elaborated in 2006, in consultation with all stakeholders. In this context she referred to relevant provisions of:

- Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea (2009);
- The Memorandum of Understanding between the Permanent Secretariat of ACCOBAMS, and the Permanent Secretariat of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution concerning the Sub-regional Coordinating Unit for the Black Sea (2012);
- Relevant decisions and Work Programs of BSC and ACCOBAMS.

125. She presented the structure of the document which set out the terms of reference for this assignment and mentioned that the existing Conservation Plan for Black Sea Cetaceans (2006-2010) was, unfortunately, never adopted at the regional level. The existing version of the Conservation Plan (2006-2010) was elaborated by a team of experts led by Alexei Birkun and was based on a strategy designed by ACCOBAMS. It aimed at facilitating co-operation among Black Sea riparian States and enhancing their abilities, essential for the conservation of cetaceans and their habitats. It envisaged common mechanisms aimed at promoting cetacean conservation and research actions, as well as capacity building, education and public awareness in the Black Sea sub-region.

126. She kindly asked for the support of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat in drafting the needed questionnaire and appointing/supporting an expert(s) to revise the Conservation Plan and to assist in carrying out the stakeholder consultations/meetings.

### 4.3 Improve capacities of national organizations and experts

#### 4.3.1 Functional stranding networks and responses to emergency situation

127. The Secretariat presented document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc20 and reminded that the Work program for 2014-2016 provided for the organization of a workshop in collaboration with Pelagos to define administrative transboundary procedure in order to facilitate response to emergency situation where transboundary situation occurs (action C4A). The administrative transboundary procedure would be presented to all ACCOBAMS Parties as a framework document for other areas.
128. Sandro Mazzariol added that during emergencies, *i.e.* mass strandings or unusual mortality events, communication is one of the most important problems along with technical and logistics gaps. In particular communication problems arise at different levels, as within the intervention team, among appointed institutions and technical organizations, with media and general public. A good and structured communication could help in solving problems and in working peacefully in stressful conditions. On-Scene-Coordination-Body, the coordination team for an emergency task force should consider this task as fundamental and appoint one person dedicated to communication. This is particularly true in transboundary events, where communication is difficult also for different protocols and procedures, cultural heritage or simply language. He remembered the Meeting that those events occur periodically, as in case of DMV outbreaks or in case of anthropogenic noise impact.
129. He added that the proposed workshop is a useful tool to analyze a sensitive case study, as the Pelagos Sanctuary, extrapolating general guidelines adaptable to the entire basin. Even if this could not be considered relevant for conservation, these general rules could give to governments involved in these exceptional events important tools to manage crisis and to intervene in an efficient way. Furthermore, this kind of guidelines help field work allowing to experts to join local task forces, sharing knowledge and equipment and giving to these teams the opportunity to work peacefully dedicating to live stranded animals and post-mortem analyses.
130. The Scientific Committee agreed that such workshop is an important step and stressed that:
- The outcomes of this workshop should be circulated to all the Parties;
  - The protocol obtained during the workshop should be applied to other regions in the ACCOBAMS area without the need to organize new workshops.

#### *4.3.2 Capacity building*

131. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present the Overview of capacity building activities in the ACCOBAMS area (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf 16).
132. As requested during the Eighth Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee (13-15 November 2012, Monaco), the Secretariat prepared an overview of capacity building activities in the ACCOBAMS area since 2005. It was prepared thanks to information provided by reports of the Secretariat since MOP2 and to information provided by Parties during the regional workshops (June 2012).
133. Taking note of all remarks on the document, the Chair concluded that the Task Manager on capacity building will identify the priorities in capacity building activities in consultation with the secretariat and will draw a roadmap of capacity building activities before the next Scientific Committee Meeting. This document will be circulated to the Scientific Committee by Email.

#### **4.4 Enhance effective conservation of cetaceans critical habitats**

134. Chloë Webster presented 3 documents prepared by Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara. She recalled that in the ACCOBAMS Working Program 2014-2016, as approved in Resolution 5.2 adopted by the Parties in 2013, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and other relevant experts, was requested to: a) develop/disseminate tools for adequate management of areas containing critical habitat, including evaluation of management effectiveness and using examples of best practice; and b) evaluate effectiveness of protected areas containing critical habitats for cetaceans using existing initiatives (such as MedPAN). Also in Resolution 5.2 the Scientific Committee was requested to update regularly a list of areas containing critical habitats of cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS region.
135. The first document (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc21) presented by Chloë Webster was an explanatory note on the list of protected areas (existing or proposed) containing or possibly containing cetacean habitat in the ACCOBAMS Region.

136. The second document (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc22) presented some terms of reference of a workshop on the effectiveness of MPAs containing critical habitats of cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area. The objective of the workshop would be to: a) facilitate protection of cetaceans in existing protected areas containing cetacean critical habitat in the ACCOBAMS region; and b) assess the need for additional place-based protection in collaboration with the effort by the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force of designating *Important Marine Mammal Areas* in the ACCOBAMS region.
137. The third document (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf17) presented by Chloë Webster, was an information note on the IUCN Task Force on Marine Mammal Protected Areas. It was noted that ACCOBAMS could help the Task Force's current effort of identifying IMMAs in many ways, e.g., by providing updated information on the presence of cetacean critical habitat in the Agreement area, and by supporting it in the task of determining thresholds and other quantitative information useful for the application in the area of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) and/or Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).
138. Commenting on the presented list of MPAs, Alain Jeudy de Grissac, the representative of IUCN, suggested that it be reorganized in three different elements:
- The list of existing MPAs including Cetacean Critical Habitats;
  - The list of proposed (or under consideration) MPAs including Cetacean Critical Habitats;
  - The list of sites where Cetacean Critical Habitats have been identified in the ACCOBAMS area.
139. He added that for the data presented in the table, some of them have to be verified or completed in consulting the MAPAMED database developed by RAC/SPA and MedPAN (areas, national designation of the site), and that additional information on marine conservation sites has to be included, in particular for sites declared as Ramsar sites in coastal lagoons, Biosphere reserves (such as the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean concerning Spain and Morocco in the Strait of Gibraltar) and Fisheries restricted Areas (FRAs) of the GFCM-FAO.
140. He indicated also that during the Mediterranean meeting on EBSA, ACCOBAMS presented the map of the areas of special importance for Cetaceans in the Mediterranean. The Scientific Committee stressed the need to update this map, with an emphasis on areas with

information gaps in order to focus research efforts in these areas and avoid misinterpretation as areas not important for cetaceans.

141. Following different comments by the participants, it was decided to create an ad hoc working group (Alain Jeudy de Grissac, Chloë Webster, Lobna Ben Nakhla, Fannie Dubois, Ibrahim Ben Amer, and ACCOBAMS Secretariat) on the TORs for the MPAs/CCH workshop. The Scientific Committee agreed on the new version of the TORs ([Annex 6](#)) as revised by the Working Group.
142. It also agreed on the suggestion of the Working Group to have the workshop organized in parallel with the joint meeting RAC/SPA (SPAMI review) and GFCM-FAO (2<sup>nd</sup> FGCM marine protected areas workshop) whose venue is tentatively Djerba (Tunisia) in June 2015.
143. The Secretariat took note of these suggestions. It will contact RAC/SPA and GFCM and will provide Secretariat services to the workshop (working documents, facilitation, etc.).

## **AGENDA ITEM 5 - COMMUNICATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

### **5.1 Information and communication**

144. The Executive Secretary presented document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf 18 on the communication activities implemented by the Secretariat, in particular:
- The launch of the ACCOBAMS Interactive database (<http://accobams.geo2i.com/>);
  - The implementation of the module on cetacean conservation in English-teaching universities;
  - The organization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Conference on cetacean conservation in Southern Mediterranean Countries (Lebanon, October 2014);
  - The establishment of the ACCOBAMS Day;
  - The organization of a Photo Exhibition in Monaco in 2015;
  - She also mentioned that the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ACCOBAMS will be celebrated in 2016, so special events should be organized on this occasion.
145. Fannie Dubois mentioned that Pelagos could collaborate with ACCOBAMS for the organization of the photo exhibition as a similar action is already planned in the Pelagos Working Program.

146. The Secretariat presented document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf 19 on “Summaries of the projects selected under the ACCOBAMS calls for proposals” underlining that the received progress and final reports of these projects were available on the ACCOBAMS website.

147. Alain Jeudy de Grissac informed the Meeting that, within the framework of a project concerning the conservation and shared management of Alboran Sea, data sheets targeting the general public will be prepared for each cetacean species present in the region in three languages (Spanish, French and English) during 2014 and widely distributed.

## **5.2 Improve the level of implementation of and compliance with ACCOBAMS Resolutions as well as the monitoring of its progress**

148. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present the letter from Mr. Bruno Diaz Lopez, Director and chief biologist of Bottlenose Dolphin Research (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc 23).

149. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that it received a letter on 2nd December 2013 from Mr. Bruno Diaz Lopez, where he informed the Secretariat about a fish farm in Sardinia that organizes touristic dolphin feeding together with swimming activities.

150. Taking into account the Rules on the ACCOBAMS Follow up Procedure, the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee invited the Secretariat to approach the relevant Focal Point to get more information on this issue.

151. The RAC/SPA representative informed the Meeting that the Focal Point from RAC/SPA, who is different than for ACCOBAMS, will be also contacted regarding this issue.

## **5.3 Cooperation with international organizations**

### *5.3.1 Contribution to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive*

152. Vincent Ridoux, co-Chair of the joint ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS working group on the MSFD, introduced document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc 24 on the overview to be prepared on the implementation of MSFD in each EU ACCOBAMS country. He explained that three operative tasks are defined: (a) to report on current progresses made in the implementation of MSFD by Members States of the EU with regards to cetaceans conservation; (b) to identify gaps and propose orientations to ACCOBAMS Member States; (c) to propose a timeline for actions of the joint working group ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS on MSFD.

153. To facilitate further cooperation between EU-ACCOBAMS member States, non EU-ACCOBAMS member States and all other range States, it is proposed to prepare an overview of existing practices at national level by using a questionnaire survey methodology. A draft questionnaire structure was proposed as well as a time line aimed at presenting results for the Ninth Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Bureau in December 2014.
154. Following the Meeting discussions, the Scientific Committee suggested the following points:
- The work will be conducted in contact with the Secretariat, notably for the adoption of the questionnaire;
  - Target persons for the questionnaire could be involved in their national MSFD process at different levels, and include ACCOBAMS focal points (list provided by the Secretariat), national MSFD coordinating persons, national descriptor D1 (Biodiversity) coordinating persons, and national cetacean persons, if applicable;
  - Target countries include all countries that are parties both to the EU and ACCOBAMS. Furthermore, it was noted that the Barcelona Convention initiative EcAp (Ecosystem Approach) is being run in parallel to MSFD at a regional level across the Mediterranean and involves all EU and non-EU Mediterranean range states. Another initiative exists in the Black Sea, but the MSFD has received less response from non-EU countries in this region. A modified version of the questionnaire might be a useful way to incorporate experiences from these countries into the survey;
  - The Secretariat shall prepare a covering letter to facilitate contacts with all target persons;
  - All original documents collected during the survey will be gathered in an e-library. National syntheses provided by governments to the EU in the course of the MSFD process are already available at EIONET website ([mdr.eionet.europa.eu](http://mdr.eionet.europa.eu)).
155. Aurélie Tasciotti, the representative of the WWF-France, informed the Meeting that WWF has launched its Mediterranean marine initiative in 2013. This initiative shall allow about 20 partners to work together around of the Mediterranean (from 5 countries where WWF is present: Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey as well as network partners, notably in Tunisia). Its purpose is to co-operate in making the Mediterranean Sea a model of sustainable development. This initiative put together a series of actions conducted with stakeholders representing Marine Protected Areas, small scale fisheries and cetacean conservation.

156. Regarding this last point, toxicological, genetic and hormonal analyses are conducted on three cetacean species, the fin, sperm and pilot whales. Information obtained is to be incorporated within the MSFD monitoring program as an indicator of environmental contamination. A document presenting this Mediterranean initiative is going to be transmitted to the Secretariat.

### *5.3.2 Collaboration with Subregional Coordination Units*

157. The Secretariat introduced document ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Doc 25 related to the collaboration with Subregional Coordination Units and the proposed activities to be carried out in 2014.

158. The RAC/SPA representative, Lobna Ben Nakhla, informed the Meeting about the activities supported by RAC/SPA since the ACCOBAMS MOP 5, within the implementation of the action plan for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea of the Barcelona Convention. She also informed the Meeting about activities carried out by IMMRAC in Israel on the education program, stranding monitoring and research program on sexing common bottlenose dolphins through craniometric features, and contribution of Lessepsian migrants to the diet of local cetaceans.

159. As regards the ACCOBAMS – RAC/SPA joint working program for 2014- 2016, she pointed out that the revision of the action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea will be carried out in collaboration with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat. The expected outputs of this exercise are an update of the Action Plan and a work plan including timetable of implementation that will be circulated to the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee for comments before being presented to the RAC/SPA Focal Points in May 2015.

160. The representative of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission (BSC PS), Iryna Makarenko, made a presentation on the activities of the BSC PS in its capacity of the Black Sea Sub Regional Coordination Unit for ACCOBAMS referring to the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2002 and amended in 2012.

161. She emphasized on the necessity to revise the Annex to the MoU for the activities for 2014/2015 and she expressed the view that this Annex could be finalized for further

circulation to the Black Sea Commission and adoption during upcoming 30<sup>th</sup> BSC Regular Meeting in November, 2014.

162. When presenting activities related to cetaceans that have taken place in the Black Sea region, Iryna Makarenko drew the attention of the participants that the Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Advisory Group on the Environmental Aspects of the Management of Fisheries and other Marine Living Resources (FOMLR) included, among the priorities for its future work, some issues related to the conservation of cetaceans, such as: (1) Cetaceans' survey for the entire Black Sea – with the support of ACCOBAMS and/or other sources and (2) Identification of the fishing methods/techniques with minimum impact on cetacean's populations. She proposed to further coordinate these issues between both Secretariats. She also kindly asked the assistance of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat in drafting the relevant chapters of reports prepared by the Black Sea Commission (Report on the Implementation of the BS SAP (2009) and Report on the State of the Black Sea Environment (SoE)) related to Black Sea cetaceans.
163. Regarding the implementation of the cetacean conservation modules in the existing postgraduate programs and initiation of enrolling the English speaking universities of the ACCOBAMS area in 2014, she stated that the BSC PS could assist in identifying such universities in the Black Sea basin and translation of relevant materials into other languages spoken in the area.
164. Regarding the collaboration for the setting up of an ACCOBAMS cetacean day and for promoting annual celebration in the Black Sea Countries, she proposed to assign such a day annually on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, together with annual celebrations of the Black Sea Day traditionally held in the individual Black Sea countries and on the regional level. She emphasized that BSC PS could allocate necessary time and facilities for possible back-to-back and/or side events of ACCOBAMS during the next celebrations, tentatively to take place on the 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2014 in Sochi (Russian Federation).

### *5.3.3 Collaboration with other organizations*

165. The Chair invited the other organizations to present relevant activities for ACCOBAMS.
166. The representative from MedPAN, Chloë Webster, after introducing the organization ([www.medpan.org](http://www.medpan.org)), presented the joint RAC/SPA - MedPAN regional database on MPAs ([www.mapamed.org](http://www.mapamed.org)) - along with the 2012 Status Report on the current system of MPAs and

indicated that the next analysis will start in June 2014 and ought to support ACCOBAMS with its GIS database and analysis of management effectiveness of areas of importance for cetaceans, jointly with IUCN Med.

She also presented an overview of MedPAN activities highlighting those undertaken in collaboration with ACCOBAMS.

167. On behalf of KAI Marine Services, the representative of OceanCare notified the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee that in the context of LIFE+ MIGRATE (2012-2016), KAI Marine will produce together with the Maltese Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) and relevant stakeholders the “NATURA 2000 Guidelines for the Conservation of Sea Turtles and Cetaceans in Maltese Waters”. These guidelines will take into consideration the regional conservation guidelines, recommendations and resolutions of ACCOBAMS. Furthermore, the draft guidelines which will be produced at the sectorial workshop of LIFE+ Project MIGRATE in October 2014, will be shared with the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS.
168. The representative of ASCOBANS took the opportunity to recall the willingness of the two agreements; ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS to collaborate and cooperate on common issues i.e. through the two joint working groups (MFSD and Noise). He also recall the willingness of ASCOBANS to have a close collaboration on common concerns in the overlap area following the ASCOBANS MOP resolution 4 (extension of the agreement) and the ACCOBAMS resolution A/4.1 (extension of the geographical scope).

#### *5.3.4 Collaboration with ACCOBAMS Partners*

169. The Secretariat introduced the information note regarding the Workshop for ACCOBAMS Partners (ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf22), describing the workshop objectives. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that the conclusions of the workshop will be presented to the Scientific Committee before the adoption of the final report.
170. The representative from IFAW, Anna Cucknell gave a short presentation summarizing the work of the International Fund for Animal Welfare’s, Song of the Whale research survey of the Aegean Sea and Levantine Basin in July and August 2013. More detailed information can be found in info ACCOBAMS-SC9/2014/Inf21, as well as a full final report on the website ([www.marineconservationresearch.org](http://www.marineconservationresearch.org)).

171. Following this presentation, the representative from the Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation, Anastasia Miliou, suggested that the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee recommends the Ikaria Basin as an area which is important for deep diving species such as sperm and beaked whales, with the hope that it could become an area protected from seismic / sonar noise. This recommendation would be made using the data from IFAW in 2013 as well as over 15 years of information from the Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation. Anastasia Miliou informed the Meeting that several reports are available at Archipelagos Institute. She proposed to forward them to the Scientific Committee to bring additional information on the importance of this area, in respect with the paragraph 26 of the report.
172. Stressing the significance of climate change, the representative of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, Jonathan Mace, informed the Meeting that the Museum was pleased to announce its partnership with ACCOBAMS to welcome the ACCOBAMS international workshop on climate change and its effect on Mediterranean cetaceans, to be hosted at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2014.
173. The representative of WWF France, Aurélie Tasciotti, stressed that one of the objective of WWF was to contribute to improve knowledge in order to pursue the conservation and sustainable management of marine and freshwater ecosystems in the Mediterranean. WWF adopts approaches ranging from field projects, to policy and advocacy, to communications and capacity building, and works with an extended network of partnerships. In this context, WWF reiterated its partnership with ACCOBAMS, stressing the importance of such collaboration.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 6 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

174. While recognizing that at the last MOP some progress was made on the organization of the Scientific Committee, Caterina Fortuna expressed some concern over the way the Scientific Committee is now organized. In particular, the new Rules of Procedure give full members of the SC different weights. The primary inequality lies in the rule that the Chair and the vice-chair can be selected only from among the CIESM and IUCN experts. In other words neither the four Regional Representatives, the three representatives of the International Organizations (IWC, ECS, CMS), or any potential National experts have access to the Scientific Committee officer positions. This is not a criticism of the present Chair or the vice-chair but rather a concern over the process; it seems appropriate that the members of the Scientific

Committee should be able to decide upon its own officers from amongst its entire membership.

175. She also pointed out that it would be useful to discuss intersessionally some aspects of the current working methods that are not specified in the Rules of Procedure. These include: (a) the room setting; (b) the order of speech with members of the Scientific Committee speaking before observers; (c) the lack of an option of organizing working groups that discuss original data and carry out original analysis on site if need or have time to fully assess the validity of any presented studies which are central to determining an informed Scientific Committee view; and (d) the lack of inclusion on the agenda some discussion on how the budget allocated to the Scientific Committee work is actually be spent. The task of the Scientific Committee is to provide the best scientific advice; it is important that the Scientific Committee itself is able to decide which working practices best allow it to fulfil this role.

176. The Chair commented that he generally agreed with these views, particularly on the problem of the Scientific Committee membership. He proposed that the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat should examine potential solutions that can be discussed and partially implemented at the next Scientific Committee Meeting in 2015.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 7 - DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING**

177. The Secretariat informed the participants that the next Scientific Committee Meeting will be held in November 2015 in Marseilles or Seville (tentative).

#### **AGENDA ITEM 8 - ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

178. The Scientific Committee approved the present report on the basis of a draft prepared by the Secretariat and reviewed by the participants. The Scientific Committee action plan will be distributed to all participants by email.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 9 - CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

179. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair closed the Meeting at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

## ANNEX 1 – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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## ANNEX 2 – AGENDA

### 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

### 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

### 3. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

3.1 Designation of the chair and of the vice-chair of the Scientific Committee

3.2 Nomination of the Task Managers supporting effort of the Scientific Committee for the implementation of the Work Program 2014-2016

3.3 Report of each Regional Representative

### 4. CONSERVATION ACTIONS

4.1 Improve knowledge about state of cetaceans

4.1.1 *Cetacean population estimates and distribution*

4.1.2 *Population Structure*

4.1.3 *Monitoring cetaceans status*

4.2 Reduce human pressures on cetaceans, particularly those related to bycatch, habitat loss and degradation (pollution)

4.2.1 *Interaction with fisheries*

4.2.2 *Anthropogenic noise*

4.2.3 *Ship strikes*

4.2.4 *Cetacean watching*

4.2.5 *Marine debris*

4.2.6 *Climate change*

4.2.7 *Species Conservation Plans*

4.3 Improve capacities of national organizations and experts

4.3.1 *Functional stranding networks and responses to emergency situation*

4.3.2 *Capacity building*

4.4 Enhance effective conservation of cetaceans critical habitats

### 5. COMMUNICATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

5.1 Information and communication

5.2 Improve the level of implementation of and compliance with ACCOBAMS Resolutions as well as the monitoring of its progress

5.3 Cooperation with international organizations

5.3.1 *Contribution to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive*

5.3.2 *Collaboration with Subregional Coordination Units*

5.3.3 *Collaboration with other organizations*

5.3.4 *Collaboration with ACCOBAMS Partners*

### 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 7. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING

### 8. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

### 9. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

**ANNEX 3 – SUPPORTING GROUP FOR EACH TASK MANAGER**

ISSUE	TASK MANAGER	SUPPORTING GROUP
Cetacean population estimates (including Basin wide survey)	Simone Panigada	IWC representative Drasko Holcer Ayaka Amaha Ozturk Sylvia Frey
Interaction with fisheries	Renaud De Stephanis	Konstantin Mihaylov Marina Sequeira
Conservation of cetaceans critical habitats	Léa David	Renaud de Stephanis Tilen Genov Sylvia Frey
Capacity Building (including public awareness and communication)	Ayaka Amaha Ozturk	Simone Panigada Marina Sequeira

## ANNEX 4 – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

### Recommendations from the report on the conservation status of cetaceans and relevant activities in Central Mediterranean

1. Based on advanced discussions developed between Tunisian researchers and their colleagues from Libya, we strongly recommend supporting the proposal of Lobna BEN NAKHLA (RACSPA) looking for the development of a project to monitor the bottlenose dolphin population that frequents the North African waters (Tunisia and Libya). Such project, similar to the one developed in the Northern Mediterranean, will allow us to estimate the population size of this species and to integrate intercet database (<http://www.intercet.it/>).

Cross-countries collaboration is essential to promote research and capacity building in Tunisia and Libya. The country lacks expertise in cetacean research which is found in other areas of the basin. Workshops and courses, attending surveys and fieldwork can all enhance capacity building in Libya. Thus we encourage collaboration of neighbouring countries to make sure the national effort may also integrate at regional level from research and monitoring to effective conservation management.

2. The implementation of a stranding network maybe difficult in Libya due to its long coastline which is mostly unpopulated and hard to access especially for the time being. Alternatively, more attention should be aimed at promoting research especially preliminary and small-scale surveys across the country. Small-scale research is lower in cost, easier to conduct and would provide preliminary reliable results. This can later be followed by more thorough surveys that will expand the research and bring it in the bigger more-detailed picture. This can take the form of University projects (MSc. and PhD) in local universities or other forms of research such as the Environmental General Authority, the Marine Biology Research Centre and local NGOs.

Finally, more collaboration and 'bridges-building' are needed with the oil industry sector in Libya; this is an essential step for cetacean research in the country since these companies would have data on cetacean presence in areas hard to access by normal research vessels.

3. Based on observations of "military dolphins" in the Adriatic Sea deployed by the US Navy to explore the seabed near Dubrovnik (southern Croatia), it seems important to provide practical examples or simply known scientific evidence of negative impacts of such activities and possible mitigation measures.

4. Financial assistance to cetacean research and conservation awareness entities that have been working for many years.

### Recommendations from the report on the conservation status of cetaceans and relevant activities in Eastern Mediterranean

The implementation of ACCOBAMS Resolution 4.17 plays a key role in preserving Cetaceans. It might be hard to follow, but it is essential for preventing strandings. ACCOBAMS should continue to request MMO reports from Focal Points after the completion of scientific research programs. This will enable to be built an archive of Cetacean abundance connected to the citations during geophysical and/or exploitation purposes surveys. Regarding observations, a GIS based grid should be developed and provided for EMODnet use with knowledge gained over the years. Therefore cetacean observation programs are encouraged in the area of Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

## **Recommendations from the report on the conservation status of cetaceans and relevant activities in Black Sea**

Direct observer programme for assessing cetacean bycatches started as a new initiative in the central Bulgarian Black Sea area in 2010. A better understanding of the rates of cetacean incidental capture, the assessment of annual bycatch in gillnet fishery and ultimately the level of removal is necessary and therefore it is recommended that independent observer programme be continued and further extended temporally and spatially. It can be considered still as necessary step for collecting and analyzing important cetacean bycatch data before introducing pingers as means for alleviating adverse impacts on cetaceans in compliance to ACCOBAMS Resolution 2.12 for the use of acoustic deterrent devices.

It is recommended that the functioning of networks for cetaceans monitoring and conservation in the riparian countries, parties to ACCOBAMS, be continued so that a long-term monitoring programme be maintained. For this purpose complete and profound strategy is needed where clearly to formulate: the basic priorities and further improvements of the activities on conservation and research; and where to underlie the vital institutional support from respective ministries and their regional units together with sustainable funding. In particular the contribution of the national focal points to ACCOBAMS (at least in Bulgaria) should be enhanced and activated.

Training on sampling and necropsy is recommended to continue as to reinforce capacity building and to allow better use of the guidelines regarding the best practices and procedures for dealing with mass mortality events due various natural and anthropogenic factors.

Research on the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, ghost fishing is essential as these types of fishery pose a major threat both to the sustainability of the Black Sea fisheries and cetacean populations and although their scale is not evaluated and largely not known they are considered as probably higher than the overall legal fishery in the Black Sea region.

## ANNEX 5 – PROPOSED JNWG WORK PROGRAM

This draft work program proposes a range of possible activities for the Joint NWG in the coming 1-3 years. **These activities require prioritization to meet both the timing requirements of ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS processes as well as the volunteer capacity of the Joint NWG.**

Joint NWG ToR	Range of potential activities proposed for 2014 (these activities require prioritization)
<p><b>I. Update and complete information on:</b></p> <p>a) Relevant activities and developments in other international bodies (both regional and global) and under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive</p>	<p>1) Key forthcoming meetings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) IMO Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction, 20-24 January 2014 (IMO MPC October 2014)</li> <li>b) CBD Expert workshop on Underwater Noise</li> <li>c) OSPAR Biodiversity Committee, 17-21 February 2014</li> <li>d) UNEP/MAP COR GEST 17-19 February 2014</li> <li>e) IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee completes 66th session, 31 March to 4 April 2014</li> <li>f) CMS Scientific Council 1-3 July 2014</li> <li>g) OSPAR Commission, 23-27 June 2014</li> <li>h) CBD SBSTTA18, 23-27 June 2014</li> <li>i) CBD CoP12, 6-17 October</li> <li>j) CMS CoP11 4-9 November 2014</li> <li>k) UNEP/MAP COR MON (dates to be determined)</li> <li>l) Relevant Meetings on MSFD (to follow)</li> <li>m) TNO meeting on sonar, sept. 2014</li> </ul> <p>Note: document submission dates are being investigated</p>

<p>b) Relevant developments and new literature especially with respect to technologies aimed at mitigating the propagation of marine noise and noise sources that may present a threat to marine life and how cetaceans are affected</p>	<p>2) Contact the Secretariats, sending recent information as appropriate, requesting them to add the information to Conf. docs or Inf. docs or to make the information available to Parties in appropriate way</p> <p>3) Develop a summary document that presents quick and accessible information about technologies aimed to mitigate noise on marine mammals and noise sources; engage in workshops with the industry</p>
<p>c) Parties' progress in implementation of:</p> <p>CMS Res.9.19: Adverse Anthropogenic Marine/Ocean Noise Impacts on Cetaceans and other Biota</p> <p>CMS Res.10.24: Further Steps to Abate Underwater Noise Pollution for the Protection of Cetaceans and other Migratory Species</p> <p>ACCOBAMS Res.3.10: Guidelines to Address the Impact of Anthropogenic Noise on Marine Mammals in the ACCOBAMS Area</p> <p>ACCOBAMS Res.4.17: Guidelines to Address the Impact of Anthropogenic Noise on Cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS Area</p> <p>ACCOBAMS Res.5.13: Conservation of Cuvier's beaked whales in the Mediterranean</p> <p>ACCOBAMS Res.5.15: Addressing the impact of anthropogenic noise</p> <p>ASCOBANS Res.6.2: Adverse Effects of Underwater Noise on Marine Mammals during Offshore Construction Activities for Renewable Energy Production</p> <p>ASCOBANS Res.7.2: Activities of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee and Work Plan</p> <p>And any relevant Resolutions still to be passed.</p>	<p>4) With the assistance of the Secretariats, collect information from Parties about their progress and the effectiveness in implementing the listed Resolutions.</p>

<p><b>II. Improvement of existing guidelines based on new scientific findings, detailing available mitigation measures, alternative technologies and standards required for achieving the conservation goals of the treaties, in particular by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d) Updating and structuring the recommendations in the ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS noise guidelines and making them applicable globally</li> <li>e) Updating the guidance on relevant mitigation technologies and management measures, and their effectiveness and cost</li> <li>f) Continuing to consult stakeholders for advice on operational constraints to take into account</li> <li>g) Recommending appropriate biological indicators and thresholds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) Request an update from the CMS Secretariat about progress on communications with Parties and any information received, as well as any additional information that might be presented to CBD SBSTTA18 and then also CBD CoP12</li> <li>6) Develop a matrix of noise guidelines in use around the world (including the ACCOBAMS guidelines) for discussions by the Joint NWG –</li> <li>7) Once discussed, develop draft CMS noise guideline advice for presentation to the CMS Scientific Council – the emphasis of this should be to prepare something that is simple and short</li> <li>8) Develop a Standard for geophysical surveys (seismic, multi-beam research activities,...) in the Mediterranean Sea (GNCC/ACCOBAMS Guidelines Doc. 22 are already there) To develop this standards, collect information on : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• which guidelines are applied in Mediterranean Sea; look at the effectiveness of the measures.</li> <li>• what are the best practices of industries ?</li> <li>• what are the geophysical activities in the area ?</li> <li>• what need to be included in the standard (certified training of MMO, PAM, etc.)</li> <li>• organise a workshop with the industry</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>For II (d) Please refer to the item IV regarding collaboration with UNEP/MAP</p>
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<p><b>III. Further develop the documents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>h) ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc.22 on Anthropogenic noise and marine mammals: review of the effort in addressing the impact of anthropogenic underwater noise in the ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS areas,</li> <li>i) ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc.23 on Implementation of underwater noise mitigation measures by industries: Operational and economical constraints, and</li> <li>j) ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc.24 Methodological Guide: “Guidance on underwater noise mitigation measures” according to available knowledge and to report about progress made to the next Meeting of Parties to ACCOBAMS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9) Develop further comments on : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc.22;</li> <li>b) ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc.23 and</li> <li>c) ACCOBAMS-MOP5/2013/Doc.24</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Continue to update these three documents until the end of 2014</p>
<p><b>IV. Provision of advice on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>k) Collaboration with other international bodies, such as OSPAR, HELCOM, CBD, IMO and IWC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10) Collaborate and engage with IMO on the next work plan related with the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction that could be considered in 2014</li> <li>11) Write to OSPAR for additional information and update on their noise mitigation considerations</li> <li>12) Pursue the ACCOBAMS collaboration with UNEP/MAP to develop specific indicator related to EO11</li> <li>13) Relevant collaboration activities with CBD (to follow)</li> </ul>

<p>l) Requirements of the relevant other bodies that countries have elected to adhere to with respect to underwater noise, such as European Directives (i.e. the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive)</p>	<p>14) Give recommendations on a development of an indicator on noise, with the overall aim of updating the list of the COP18 agreed GES, targets, indicators by COP19 in 2015 (UNEP/MAP).</p> <p>15) Further develop table presented during the COR GEST Meeting regarding EO11 for adoption of noise indicator by COP19 (UNEP/MAP)</p> <p>16) With the assistance of the Secretariats, collect information from Parties about their progress and the effectiveness in implementing the Habitat Directive</p> <p>17) With the assistance of the Secretariats, collect information from Parties about their progress and the effectiveness in implementing the MSFD (descriptor 11)</p>
<p>m) Opportunities for influencing decisions of other relevant bodies in order to achieve more effective protection of marine life from impacts of underwater noise</p>	<p>18) Develop a draft advisory note for governments about factors to consider for effective mitigation of noise propagation into MPAs or other protected areas, and seeking comment from the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) IUCN SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Taskforce</li> <li>b) IUCN WCPA Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group</li> <li>c) IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group, Pinniped Specialist Group, Sirenian Specialist Group, Polar Bear Specialist Group, Shark Specialist Group and CMS ScC Aquatic Mammals Working Group</li> </ul> <p>19) With comments incorporated, present the advisory note to the CMS Scientific Council, ASCOBANS Advisory Committee and ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee for comment and forward recommendation</p> <p>20) Engage industries, Parties, NGO with implementing ship quieting guidelines</p>

<p><b>V. Design, and help implement as appropriate, pilot projects to test and improve the existing noise guidelines (ACCOBAMS Res. 4.17 and ASCOBANS AC17/Doc.4-08) and mitigation measures for their application in the field</b></p>	<p>21) Define 2 or 3 priorities of pilot project (ex.: define save levels (at least for MPAs), test quieting technologies, etc.)</p> <p>22) Propose 2 or 3 pilot projects to ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS/CMS</p> <p>23) Engage with Gvmt and non Gvmt Parties in implementing the IMO ship quieting Guidelines within the reagon.</p> <p>The new guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recognize that shipping noise can have short-term and long-term impacts on marine life;</li> <li>- call for measurement of shipping noise according to objective ISO standards, which are themselves on the verge of adoption;</li> <li>- identify computational models for determining effective quieting measures;</li> <li>- provide guidance for designing quieter ships and for reducing noise from existing ships, especially from propeller cavitation; and</li> <li>- advise owners and operators on how to minimize noise through ship operations and maintenance, such as by polishing ship propellers to remove fouling and surface roughness.</li> </ul> <p>While these (as yet) are voluntary guidelines, not mandatory code, they put the IMO's imprimatur on noise reduction.</p>
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<p><b>VI. Follow up activities specified by ACCOBAMS Parties related to conservation of Cuvier's beaked whales in the Mediterranean, by:</b></p> <p>n) Developing, in collaboration with Parties, non-Parties, as well as NATO and other stakeholders as necessary, implementable measures to reduce impacts of intense noise activities within areas identified as of special concern for Cuvier's beaked whales for consideration by the next Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS</p>	<p>24) Create dialogue with stakeholders and other potential organisation to reduce impacts</p> <p>25) Review of existing measures and if they could be applied in other regions</p> <p>26) Extend this activities to other regions than ACCOBAMS</p> <p>27) Establish dialogue with stakeholders to develop implementable measures.</p> <p>28) Dialogue needs to go through the secretariats and will need to be reviewed by Scientific Committee, Advisory Committee and Scientific Council</p> <p>29) Attend September Meeting in Amsterdam, which focuses on military noise and organise a meeting around that workshop on which most NATO countries attend,</p> <p>30) Get a review what the Navy does in EU waters</p>
<p>o) Supporting the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee over the study on the extent and temporal variability of the habitat of species that are known to be particularly vulnerable to man-made noise (eg <i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>), in order to ensure that more data are made available, to increase the model's robustness and to compare different algorithms for best results</p>	<p>31) Define the process of exchange and communication with the Scientific Committee</p> <p>32) Propose a technical presentation of models (methodology, advantage/disadvantage, performance/limit, etc.) both for scientific and non-scientific</p> <p>33) Develop the models in other area</p>

<b>VII. Responding to relevant Resolutions and priorities of CMS, ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>34) Further develop contacts with the industry, including writing to industry about the ACCOBAMS guidelines Develop a summary document that present quick and accessible information about measures to mitigate noise on marine mammals; Rules, Tools and procedures</li><li>35) Organize workshop with different industries (i.e. special workshop for geophysical Industry) and develop a standard.</li><li>36) Aquatic mammal conference 2015 will dedicate one day on policy. Attend and establish and improve dialogue with member states.</li><li>37) Attend 2015 Barcelona Conference on ONP. Host an Noise and Environmental Impact Assessment workshop at the ECS meeting (Remark: Risk assessment is a different audience, how to bring all people related to risk assessment in the process?)</li><li>38) Develop CMS level guidelines (ie broader than European context) for EIA relating to marine noise for the CMS Scientific Council to consider, and possibly recommend to the CMS Conference of the Parties</li><li>39) Develop European level guidelines for EIA relating to marine noise for ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS to consider</li><li>40) Identify and map anthropogenic noise/cetaceans interactions hot spots in the ACCOBAMS area</li><li>41) Identify and map anthropogenic noise hot spots</li><li>42) Identify and map cetacean hot spots</li></ul>
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<p><b>Other) Increasing the Joint NWG Profile in coordination with the Secretariats</b></p>	<p>43) Prepare general presentation about the Joint NWG for use in meetings with other organisations</p> <p>44) Prepare the Joint NWG online workspace, and launch it to the whole Joint NWG -</p> <p>45) Invite international bodies to join the Joint NWG and exchange information where possible (including seeking to have Joint NWG document distributed to member States of key organisations)</p> <p>46) Invite additional expert members to participate in the Joint NWG</p> <p>47) Host a Joint NWG meeting in the margins of the ECS meeting</p> <p>48) Further develop contacts with the industry, including writing to industry about the ACCOBAMS guidelines</p> <p>49) Recirculate list of participants/members and reconfirm the aim and purpose of the NWG (i.e. to serve the ACCOBAMS SC, ASCOBANS AC and CMS SC as advisory group with the purpose to ensure cetacean conservation from ONP) into the work program.</p>
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**General remarks :**

- 50) Need to define what to be produce for each meeting (ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS, CMS)
- 51) Clarify the organisation of the JNWG
- 52) Organise more meeting of the JNWG

**ANNEX 6 – TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKSHOP ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MPAS  
CONTAINING CRITICAL HABITATS OF CETACEANS IN THE ACCOBAMS AREA**

*Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara*

**Background**

Article II.1 of the ACCOBAMS directs Parties to co-operate to create and maintain a network of specially protected areas in order to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans. Furthermore, the Conservation Plan (Annex 2 to the Agreement) requires that the Parties will endeavour to establish and manage specially protected areas corresponding to the areas which serve as habitats of cetaceans.

However, until now very few, if any, specially protected areas for cetaceans have been established by the Parties since ACCOBAMS came into force in 2002, in spite of the several pertinent Resolutions adopted by the Parties themselves. This is a demonstration that requesting countries to engage in creating cetacean MPAs should be accompanied by efforts dedicated to creating conditions whereby such engagement can be honoured.

Such conditions have been, and still are, very difficult, judging from the slow rate by which ACCOBAMS countries have been accruing marine surface to the complex of existing marine protected areas in the region during the past decade, whether to protect cetaceans or any other element of marine biodiversity, despite all such countries having subscribed to a large number of :

- international commitments e.g. CBD's Aichi Target 11<sup>1</sup>, and the designation of *Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas* (EBSAs),
- regional initiatives, e.g. the declaration of SPAMIs in the Mediterranean.

Furthermore, countries from the Mediterranean are engaged in cetacean conservation actions, *inter alia* through protected areas, by UNEP MAP's Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Process, and – limited to the EU Member States – by the requirement of attaining *Good Environmental Status* of their marine waters as prescribed by the Marine Strategy Directive.

Amongst the means for enabling conditions whereby the Parties to ACCOBAMS will respect Article II.1 of the Agreement, the possibility should be considered of facilitating cetacean conservation in existing protected areas containing critical habitat, through an enhancement of their management effectiveness. Nevertheless, the need for additional place-based protection should also be assessed, and accordingly the establishment of protective regimes in unprotected cetacean critical habitat in the ACCOBAMS region should be also promoted.

In the ACCOBAMS Working Programme 2014-2016, as approved in Resolution 5.2 adopted by the Parties in 2013, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and other relevant experts, was requested to: a) develop/disseminate tools for adequate management of areas containing critical habitat, including evaluation of management effectiveness and using examples of best practice; and b) evaluate effectiveness of protected areas containing critical habitats for cetaceans using existing initiatives (such as MedPAN). Also in Resolution 5.2 the Scientific Committee was requested to update regularly a list of areas containing critical habitats of cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS region.

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<sup>1</sup> “By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.” [emphasis added]

These Terms of Reference refer to a Workshop, ideally to be held in June 2015 (see below), which will be designed to support the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and the Scientific Committee to comply with the requests by the Parties contained in Resolution 5.2.

### **Objectives of the Workshop**

- To present and review the list of existing MPAs including cetaceans critical habitats (CCH) and develop a specific database (jointly RAC/SPA, MedPAN, IUCN-Med and ACCOBAMS)
- To evaluate the management effectiveness in these MPAs with CCH (based on an inquiry developed by MedPAN)
- To update during the workshop the existing guidelines for the management of MPAs including CCH to adapt them to the Mediterranean context using best practices (based on international and regional examples)
- To propose recommendations for CCH in MPAs and prepare a workplan for their implementation

### **Outputs of the Workshop**

- Database (reviewed)
- Management effectiveness report in MPAs with CCH
- Mediterranean guidelines for MPAs with CCH
- Recommendations (and workplan) to be forwarded to the Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS

### **Key Players to be involved**

- Members of the scientific community;
- Relevant national administrations and institutions involved in MPAs
- MPA managers;
- International and regional instruments such as Regional Conventions (Barcelona, RAC/SPA, Bucharest, and OSPAR), CMS (ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS), RAMSAR and Law of the Sea (IMO), GFCM-FAO, Pelagos Agreement and European Commission in relation to the Natura 2000 program.
- Relevant regional organizations such as MedWet, MedPAN, WWF-MedPO, IUCN-Med
- Relevant foundations and donor agencies
- Specialized international technical bodies such as the IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force, and CIESM Task force on Marine Mammals;

### **Number of participants**

Estimated 25-40

### **Proposed venue**

RAC/SPA SPAMI conference to be organized in June 2015 (Djerba-Tunisia) including the second working group on MPAs of GFCM